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Housekeepers' Chat

Thursday, February 7, 1929
U. S. Department of Agriculture

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "The Art of Being Well Dressed." From Bureau of Home Economics,
U. S. D. A.

Bulletins available: "Aunt Sammy's Radio Recipes," and "Aunt Sammy's Radio Record."

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"Thank you for the dinner suggestions and the new recipes," writes a radio friend. "And more power to the Menu Specialist. Does she have any breakfast menus up her sleeve? My family is rather hard to please, at breakfast time, and they keep me fairly dizzy, planning appetizing morning meals."

I read this letter to the Menu Specialist. She did have some breakfast menus up her sleeve -- or wherever she keeps them. She seems to have an inexhaustible supply, doesn't she?

As soon as I have read you Miss Maude Campbell's article, on "The Art of Being Well Dressed," I'll give you the breakfast menus, and a quite delicious recipe. First, though, we must have Miss Campbell's talk, on

The Art of Being Well Dressed

"When Aunt Sammy mentioned this subject," says Miss Campbell, "I immediately thought of two girls of my acquaintance. One of them is always well dressed, and her clothes are always appropriate, for the occasion. The other girl never wears the correct thing, even though her closet is literally bulging with clothes. These two girls make practically the same salaries, but it is the well-dressed girl, the girl who has fewer clothes, who was able to start a Christmas savings account last month.

"The chief difference between these two girls is that one puts considerable thought on her clothes problem, and the other does not. Only one girl in a hundred (or is it a thousand?) can see any reason for planning the garments she must buy, and the amount she can afford to spend on them, in one year. 'What's the use?' says the Average Girl. 'I know well enough, without planning, that when my best work dress wears out at the elbows, and my shoes won't stand for a second re-soling, that I need a new dress and new shoes! What's the use to plan?'

"In answering this question, it might be well to say, first of all, that every woman spends a certain amount of money each year, on clothes. How many

of us know that amount. Wouldn't we be better off if we knew approximately how much we were going to spend on clothes this year? Of course, it isn't imperative that the well-dressed girl know exactly how much she intends to spend on her wardrobe, but she does know that she must plan very carefully for the clothes she buys, in regard to their cost, color, texture, design, suitableness to the occasion, and becomingness to her type.

"For example, supposing that a dress has just fallen to pieces all at once, after two years of faithful wear; how should one go about to replace it? The girl who doesn't stop to think before she buys, sees a lovely creation in the store window as she passes by on pay day. 'Stunning!' she says to herself. (Gorgeous color, beautiful beading, and the price -- I have enough in my pocket-book to pay for it!) In she goes, and tries on the dress. It fits perfectly -- it doesn't need a 'speck' of altering. She buys the dress and carries it home, highly pleased with herself. She wears it that very evening. Her friends -- that is, most of her friends -- tell her that she looks like a million dollars. But somehow, she doesn't feel like a million dollars. It must be the color of her hose. She needs another pair to match the dress. And her shoes -- well, the new dress calls for a pair of satin shoes, and how is she going to afford another pair of dress shoes, before April? And her hat, bought a few weeks before, which never did look right with her coat, looks absolutely grotesque with the new dress! And her gloves, bought on the bargain counter only last week. What an unattractive shade to wear with the new dress. But the money is spent, and there'll be no more till another pay day rolls 'round.

"Now, take the case of the other girl -- the girl who always looks well dressed. First of all, she has a color scheme and sticks to it. Not that everything she wears is the same color -- mercy no! But her colors harmonize. She knows that her clothing must be built around a center, and she herself is the center. She may change her color plan, from season to season, but whatever her color plan is, she keeps it in mind, even when she buys her underwear.

"For instance, she goes to look at hats, and finds one which is especially becoming in color and in design. It harmonizes with last year's coat. Therefore, her new dress is made to harmonize with both the coat and the hat. She might have bought the dress ready-made, but being clever with her needle and her sewing machine, she makes her dress and saves some money. When new shoes and hose and gloves are needed, they are chosen to harmonize with the dress, the coat, and the hat, and her costume is complete for a season.

"One of the difficult things to do is to change one's color scheme. For example, you may become very tired of wearing browns, and beige, and you can wear blues just as well. By careful planning, a change can be made from browns to blues, although it may require a year or two to make the change complete. Now, you may ask, what has all this planning to do with the cost? The answer is, planning eliminates spasmodic buying. Plan your wardrobe, and no more will you be led to buy dresses and coats and hats which do not fit your scheme just because they appeal to your fancy at the moment.

"The upkeep of a garment is another very important factor in its cost. How often will it need cleaning? Can you clean it yourself? If not, how much will your cleaning bill amount to, by the time the dress is worn out?

"You can learn a great deal, by keeping account of your clothing costs for a year, and studying this report carefully. Are you wearing out more stockings than you should? Try another brand. Perhaps you are not paying enough money for your stockings. Try a better quality and see if they are not cheaper in the long run. The same might be true of other articles.

"In conclusion, I might say that 'the art of being well dressed' is not learned in a day, or a week, or even a month, but by years of experience. Although money is one of the important factors in the art of being well dressed, it is perhaps the least essential. So many times one hears the remark made about a well-dressed woman. 'If I had all the money she has to spend, I'd look like a million dollars, too!'

"But let's forget about the million and remember what wonders can be accomplished with a moderate sum of money, careful buying, and common sense."

That's all of Miss Campbell's paper. After reading it, I've decided not to buy that rose-colored hat I saw in the window. I really haven't a thing to wear it with.

Now let's turn our attention to breakfast. Want to write the menus first? Then I'll give you the recipes.

Breakfast Number One: Grapefruit; Creamed Liver and Ham on Toast; Buttered Toast; and a Beverage. I'll read each menu twice: Grapefruit; Creamed Liver and Ham on Toast; Buttered Toast; and a Beverage.

Breakfast Number Two: Orange Juice; Scrapple; Toasted Rolls; and a Beverage. Once more: Orange Juice; Scrapple; Toasted Rolls; and a Beverage. The rather homely little oranges which do not look nice as oranges, are very appetizing in the form of orange juice.

Breakfast Number Three: Canned Figs; French Toast; Bacon; and a Beverage. Canned Figs; French Toast; Bacon; and a Beverage. I think you'll like the canned figs, especially those put up in a light sirup, not too sweet.

All ready now, for the recipe; Creamed Liver and Ham on Toast, one of the best breakfast dishes I ever tasted. Four ingredients, for Creamed Liver and Ham on Toast:

1 pound liver	1-1/2 cups cream or rich milk, and
1 pound sliced ham	2 tablespoons chopped parsley

Four ingredients: (Repeat)

Wipe the liver and remove the skin. Cook the ham in a covered frying pan, until tender, then remove and grind it. In the meantime, cook the liver slowly in the ham drippings until tender. Cut into small pieces, add the ground ham, the chopped parsley and the cream, and stir until well mixed. Serve on crisp, thin toast.

When used as a breakfast dish, ham and bacon can of course be cooked the day before. Or left-overs of ham and bacon, too small to be served alone, may be combined.

Tomorrow: A Sunday dinner menu, and at least one recipe.

